

Montana Cause for Paws is a group of animal advocates who have organized with the goal of ensuring the humane treatment of animals - specifically those animals who are victims of the commercial breeding industry.

Currently there are no laws in Montana that provide basic guidelines for the humane care of adult breeding dogs and puppies that are housed in commercial breeding facilities. Although the USDA has established guidelines, Montana has no authority to ensure that these guidelines are met.

There are currently about 40 puppy mills in Montana. As a consequence of our current weak laws, more unscrupulous breeders are moving to Montana. Because most of these operations are generally located in remote areas, they can escape notice by neighbors and authorities. Montana has become a destination for these breeders. The deplorable conditions of these operations go against the grain of our Montana values and our stewardship for the land and livestock of our state.

Montana Cause for Paws was organized because we were personally impacted by the consequence of poor and irresponsible breeding practices. Puppy mills mass produce dogs without regard for health or temperament, sending a large number of sick, unsocialized, and genetically inferior dogs into homes of the unsuspecting buyer. The financial and emotional burden experienced by the buyers of these dogs extends beyond them to the local shelters and eventually to the taxpayers.

On **February 17th**, Representative Dave McAlpin will be introducing a bill aimed at regulating commercial breeding facilities. The object of the bill is to ensure that dogs living in these facilities are provided with adequate housing and food, clean fresh water, exercise, and appropriate medical care. We are asking your help in supporting this bill.

We attempted to pass this bill two years ago and were unsuccessful. We learned then that people who are "against" things are far more vocal than people who are "for" things. This week we will be sending you a "fact sheet", a copy of the finished bill, and finally a plea for your voice in favor of this bill. Please help us to pass this bill by showing your ACTIVE support.

Sincerely,

Montana Cause for Paws

THE HEARING FOR THE PUPPY MILL BILL(1693) WILL BE HELD IN HELENA ON TUES., FEBRUARY 17TH AT 3:00PM IN THE HOUSE AG.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU CAN TESTIFY.

The list of contact numbers will be forthcoming.

From: Jim & Donna Cook (diamondog@stignatius.net)
To: carey.fran@yahoo.com
Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 10:24:40 PM
Subject: Letter to legislature.

Members of the Montana Legislature,

I am writing to request your careful consideration of HB 548, Bill Draft number LC1693.
The short title is: Require inspection for dog breeding facilities.
The primary sponsor is Dave McAlpin.

I am in favor of a mandatory state inspection of commercial dog breeding facilities.
My name is Donna Cook. I own and operate a dog boarding, grooming and training facility in St. Ignatius, Lake County, MT. I have worked in various capacities in the pet industry and in Montana Law Enforcement, Animal Control for 15 years.

Some time in the summer of 2003 I visited a commercial dog breeding facility that had recently moved near my home. I was given a tour of that facility and was told by the proprietor that there were 280 breeding dogs on site. I saw two small buildings with wire cages on two levels lining both sides of a center passageway. There were automatic feeders and waterers. The cages were about 30" square and there was a passage door to a covered outdoor cage of the same size. They were made of wire and had washdown trays under them that caught the excrement and I was told that it flowed into a septic system. There was a third building where dogs with puppies were housed and I did not see inside that building. I counted over 15 different small dog breeds and some Border Collies on chains in another area. There were between 2 and 5 dogs in each cage. It was very hot inside the buildings and the odor was very strong. The dogs appeared anxious and I saw dogs with injuries to eyes and one nursing dog with an injury to it's back. My overall impression of the facility was that it was overcrowded, poorly ventilated and that it was automated to the extent that none of the dogs could receive any more than minimal human contact for maintenance care. The only source of exercise available to the dogs was frenetic circling from the indoor cages to the outdoor ones, approximately 60" of wire-floored space. I was told by the breeder that she intended to have 500 breeding dogs within the first year of arriving in Montana.

I provide pet care services to dog owners in Lake, Ravalli and Sanders Counties. I may have in my care up to 30 dogs at peak times. Caring for this many dogs takes me an average of 12 hours per day. I am convinced that dogs require several periods of exercise daily along with structured human interaction and affection.

Over the past 5 years I have groomed and boarded pets purchased from the local commercial dog breeder. Some of my clients have reported having to seek veterinary care for these dogs within the first weeks after purchase for intestinal problems, skin problems, eye problems and joint deformities. For 15 years I have taught basic obedience classes, trained dogs and educated clients as to responsible pet ownership, pet care and training. Selection of a puppy suitable for family companionship requires knowledge of health, soundness of temperament, socialization and careful handling. This should begin at the breeding facility and, ideally, the breeder is a continuing resource for information and support after the purchase of a pet. My customers have not reported having this support from this commercial breeder. Many of the dogs from the commercial facility are resold, given away or taken to the Mission Valley Animal Shelter.

Mass production of dogs without an understanding of their needs is unethical. Adequate resources and staffing to responsibly house, feed and provide for medical care should be required and inspected by a

state veterinarian. The USDA states on its' website that states have the authority to impose stricter regulations than those stipulated and monitored by their inspectors.

Recent legal interventions in cases of hoarding, transport of animals into Montana under cruel conditions, rescue of animals suffering neglect and abuse have cost our counties and our state and each of us. Stewardship of the land and of our natural resources is our states rallying call. Please vote to enact a law that will govern the practices of commercial breeding of companion dogs. Where did so many of us learn our love for animals and the outdoors but from our childhood pets?

Sincerely,

Donna B. Cook dba Diamond Dog Ent.
74570 US Hwy 93
St. Ignatius, MT 59865
406-745-3401

Members of the Montana Legislature

Re: HB 548, Bill Draft Number LC1693

Short Title: Require inspection for dog breeding facilities

We are writing to request your consideration and support of HB 548, Bill Draft Number LC1693, for which Dave McAlpin is the primary sponsor.

We live next to a very large dog breeding facility. They have between 300 to 500 breeding female dogs. We have been told that they would like to increase the number to around 700.

They moved to Montana in 2003 from Kansas. When we heard they had purchased property next to ours, and that they would have a large puppy breeding facility of approximately 500 dogs we were very concerned. I called the County Attorney and asked him if we had any rights concerning this. I was told by him that "I guess it just depends on who has the most money for a lawsuit." So, basically we had no laws to protect us from a large breeding facility, such as this from coming in next to us.

Our experience living next to this facility has been anything but pleasant. The septic system for the dog operation is far too small for that many dogs. The first summer they were here, they had a septic service come to pump the septic system. They told the septic service to spread the sewer on their field, which joins our property. This was done, right in front of our house. This was in the middle of July. You can imagine how that smelled for about two weeks. I thought pig manure smelled bad, but it can't hold a candle to dog manure. We could hardly stand to be outside it was so terrible. The next summer they had the septic service come out to pump the sewer once again. This time, I called the county sanitation department. They got the first load dumped out in the field, but we got it stopped before they got the second load dumped. They were told that there is a dumping sight for that, and that it didn't cost anymore for them to take it to the dump sight. They were told that it was illegal to dump it on the field, and to have it taken to the dump sight from that time forward.

In the early spring of 2007, the sewer system was overflowing into the barrow pit of the county road. It was level full. The smell was so bad, we could hardly stand it. The neighbors and school bus driver could hardly stand to drive past the dog farm (puppy mill), the smell was so bad. We all got together and called the county sanitation department to complain. We telephoned and asked that something be done. The next day an excavator arrived. A trench was dug to send the overflowing sewer out into a pond in their field. We were told by the county sanitation department that this was just a temporary fix. It is now two years later and the temporary fix still stands. I don't think the county ever came out and even inspected it after that. They have not taken any measure to correct the problem. The sewer from this location, draining into that pond, ends up going through the neighbors property, and eventually ends up draining into Post Creek. We are concerned that this could contaminate peoples well water, and stock water.

We smell the dog sewer very strong everyday when they rinse the manure out of the dog cages.

The wind blows from the northwest 99 per cent of the the time. It blows the smell right to our place.

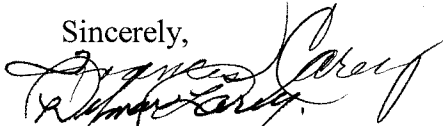
This dog operation has devaluated the property value of every neighbor around it. Nobody would want to buy property next to 500 barking dogs and a very over capacitated sewer system that runs into an open pond, due to a severe overflowing problem.

The dogs are in cages, probably about 30 inches square, with wire floors. The dogs are never let out to exercise, but are kept in the cages. We feel this is an animal cruelty issue, a health issue, and a ground water issue.

Montana Cause for Paws is a group of animal advocates who have organized with the goal of ensuring the humane treatment of animals - specifically those animals who are victims of the commercial breeding industry. (See enclosed letter). We are in hopes of getting your support for this bill, HB 548. Montana needs some laws to prevent our state from becoming a dumping ground for these types of operations.

Your kind support for this bill will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Frances Carey', written over the printed name.

Frances Carey

Delmar Carey

57254 Old Freight Road

St. Ignatius, MT. 59865